

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An epidural needle, comprising:

A[[n]] stiff elongate tube defining a longitudinal axis having a proximal end, a distal end and an axial hollow bore having an inside diameter therethrough, wherein the distal end is a sharpened tip ~~and the tube has sufficient stiffness to penetrate suitable for penetrating a patient's tissue and to be placed in a patient's epidural space;~~

a hub having a proximal end, a distal end and an open passageway therethrough, said hub being attached to the proximal end of said elongate tube so that said hollow bore of said elongate tube is in fluid communication and substantial axial alignment with said open passageway, said hub further having a cavity therein disposed between said proximal end and said distal end of said hub;

a resilient member permanently mounted within the hub having an opening therethrough defining an inner diameter and disposed in said cavity so that said opening is substantially axially aligned and in fluid communication with said open passageway; and

a clamp selectively movable between an open position wherein said inner diameter of said resilient member is substantially unaffected and a clamp position wherein said clamp causes a strain to at least a portion of said resilient member thereby reducing, but not occluding, said inner diameter of said opening through at least a portion of said resilient member.

2. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of said clamp is disposed within the hub and a portion of the clamp projects outwardly from said hub to facilitate the practitioner's selective movement of said clamp between said open position and said clamp position.

3. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 2 wherein said portion of said clamp that projects outwardly from said hub further includes a releasable latch for selectively retaining said clamp in said clamp position.
4. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 3 further include a push tab extending away from the releasable latch to facilitate unclamping said clamp from said clamp position.
5. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 4 wherein the push tab is oriented for movement perpendicular to the elongate tube.
6. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 3 further including a support leg that limits movement of the latch.
7. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 1 wherein the clamp includes a pair of legs defining at least one radiused portion therein.
8. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 7 wherein the resilient member defines a radiused portion and the radiused portion of the pair of legs has a radius substantially the same as the radiused portion of the resilient member.
9. (Original) The epidural needle of claim 8 where the pair of legs defines a second radiused portion adjacent to the at least one radiused portion.
10. (Currently Amended) A combined spinal epidural needle set comprising:
 - an epidural needle including a[[n]] stiff elongate tube defining a longitudinal axis having a proximal end, a distal end and an axial hollow bore having an inside diameter therethrough, wherein the distal end is a sharpened tip suitable for penetrating a patient's tissue and entry of the patient's epidural space, said epidural needle having a hub having a proximal end, a distal end and an open passageway therethrough, said hub being attached to the proximal end of said elongate tube so that said hollow bore of said

elongate tube is in fluid communication and substantial axial alignment with said open passageway and wherein said hub further having a cavity disposed between said proximal end and said distal end of said hub, a resilient member having an opening therethrough defining an inner diameter and disposed in said cavity so that said opening is substantially axially aligned and in fluid communication with said open passageway, and a clamp having a releasable latch disposed about said resilient member, said clamp being selectively movable between an open position wherein said inner diameter of said resilient member is substantially unaffected and a clamp position wherein said clamp causes a strain to said resilient member thereby reducing said inner diameter of said opening through said resilient member; and

a spinal needle having an outside diameter less than said inside diameter of said hollow tube disposed within said hollow bore, and wherein a practitioner using said epidural needle to position said spinal needle may freely axially move said spinal needle within said hollow bore with respect to said epidural needle and fix a position of said spinal needle relative to said epidural needle by said reduction of said inner diameter opening through said resilient member to a diameter less than said outside diameter of the spinal needle by movement of said clamp to said clamp position thereby to grasp releasably the spinal needle sufficiently to fix the position of the spinal needle with respect to the epidural needle, wherein the spinal needle is not occluded in the clamp position, thereby permitting delivery of medicament to a patient's subarachnoid space.

11. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 10 wherein the spinal needle includes an indicia formed thereon for providing an indication to the practitioner of the location of the spinal needle with respect to the epidural needle.

12. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 11 wherein at least a portion of said clamp projects outwardly from said hub to facilitate the practitioner's selective movement of said clamp between said open position and said clamp position.

13. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 12 further including a push tab extending away from the releasable latch to facilitate unclamping said clamp from said clamp position.

14. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 13 wherein the push tab is oriented for movement perpendicular to the elongate tube.

15. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 14 further including a support leg that limits movement of the latch.

16. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 10 wherein the clamp includes a pair of legs defining at least one radiused portion therein.

17. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 16 wherein the resilient member defines a radiused portion and the radiused portion of the pair of legs has a radius substantially the same as the radiused portion of the resilient member.

18. (Original) The combined spinal epidural needle set of claim 17 where the pair of legs defines a second radiused portion adjacent to the at least one radiused portion.

19. (Currently Amended) An epidural needle including:

a[[n]] stiff elongate tube defining a longitudinal axis having a proximal end, a distal end and an axial bore having an inside diameter therethrough, wherein the distal end is a sharpened tip and the tube has sufficient stiffness to penetrate a patient's tissue and to permit entry into a patient's epidural space;

a hub having a proximal end, a distal end and an open passageway therethrough, the hub being attached to the elongate tube so that the hollow bore of the elongate tube is in fluid communication and substantial axial alignment with the open passageway, the hub further having a cavity disposed therein between the proximal end and the distal end of the hub;

a resilient member, distinct from the elongate tube, having an opening, at least in part, therethrough defining an inner diameter and disposed in the cavity so that the opening is substantially aligned and in fluid communication with the open passageway, wherein the resilient member fixedly secured within the cavity and restrained from axial displacement with respect to the hub; and

a clamp selectively moveable between a first position wherein the resilient member is undeformed and a second position wherein the resilient member is deformed such that the inner diameter of the opening is changed through at least a portion of the resilient member, but the inner diameter of the opening is not occluded.

20. (Original) The needle of claim 19 wherein the clamp comprises a deformable U-shaped member having an apex and two legs, wherein a living hinge is disposed at the apex and a latch is disposed on the legs for securing the legs in a relatively fixed position.